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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.
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09/361,626

07/27/99

MOK

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EXAMINER

CINTINS, I

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1724

DATE MAILED:

12/14/99

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks

Office Action Summary

Application No.
09/361,626

Applicant

Mok et al.

Examiner
Ivars C. Cintins

Group Art Unit
1724



☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on _____

☐ This action is **FINAL**.

☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, **prosecution as to the merits is closed** in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11; 453 O.G. 213.

A shortened statutory period for response to this action is set to expire 3 month(s), or thirty days, whichever is longer, from the mailing date of this communication. Failure to respond within the period for response will cause the application to become abandoned. (35 U.S.C. § 133). Extensions of time may be obtained under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a).

Disposition of Claims

☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are pending in the application.

Of the above, claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

☒ Claim(s) 1-8 is/are rejected.

☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

☐ Claims _____ are subject to restriction or election requirement.

Application Papers

☒ See the attached Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948.

☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are objected to by the Examiner.

☐ The proposed drawing correction, filed on _____ is ☐ approved ☐ disapproved.

☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d).

☐ All ☐ Some* ☐ None of the CERTIFIED copies of the priority documents have been
☐ received.

☐ received in Application No. (Series Code/Serial Number) _____

☐ received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

*Certified copies not received: _____

☐ Acknowledgement is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e).

Attachment(s)

☒ Notice of References Cited, PTO-892

☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s), PTO-1449, Paper No(s). _____

☐ Interview Summary, PTO-413

☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review, PTO-948

☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application, PTO-152

--- SEE OFFICE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING PAGES ---

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The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 7 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. The term "adjusting" (claim 7, line 2) is vague, and indefinite as to the limitation intended. Also, the term "said chlor-alkali process" (claim 8, line 1) is indefinite, since the claims do not positively recite a chlor-alkali process. Applicant should note that the term "for use in a chlor-alkali ... process" (claim 1, lines 3-4) is merely a statement of intended use, and does not require such a chlor-alkali process.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

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Claims 1-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nagy (U.S. Patent No. 4,073,706). The reference discloses a process for removing trace amounts (i.e. up to 500 ppb) of aluminum from a sodium chloride brine by treating the brine with magnesium chloride (col. 2, lines 38-39) to produce a magnesium concentration of about 5 ppm in the brine (col. 2, line 37), and subsequently adding sodium hydroxide (col. 2, lines 61-62) to this brine to provide an alkalinity concentration of 0.15 g/L in this brine (col. 3, line 47), thereby forming a magnesium aluminum hydroxide precipitate. Accordingly, this reference discloses the claimed invention with the exception of the recited magnesium to aluminum molar ratio. However, the exact magnesium to aluminum molar ratio in the reference process is not seen to materially affect the overall results of this process, or to produce any new and unexpected result; and is therefore deemed to be an obvious matter of choice, which is insufficient to patentably distinguish the claims.

Rinaldi et al (U.S. Patent No. 3,816,592), Ogawa et al (U.S. Patent No. 4,155,820), Kelly (U.S. Patent No. 4,450,057) and Reed et al (U.S. Patent No. 4,966,764) disclose conventional techniques for removing aluminum impurities from an alkali metal halide brine.

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Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to I. Cintins whose telephone number is (703) 308-3840. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 7:30 AM to 6:00 PM.

The fax phone numbers for this art unit are: (703) 305-3599 for "Official" faxes after Final Rejection; (703) 305-7718 for all other "Official" faxes; and (703) 305-3602 for "Draft" and other "Unofficial" faxes.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0661.



Ivars C. Cintins
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1724

I. Cintins
December 11, 1999